**Instructional Strategies for Building Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary**

**Structures that Support Retelling and Summarizing**

* **B-M-E (Beginning-Middle-End).** Students write three paragraphs summarizing important events that occurred at the beginning (paragraph 1), middle (paragraph 2), and end (paragraph 3) of the story. If students have trouble recalling events from the story, prompt them to use their sticky notes or an illustration from the book.
* **Five-Finger Retell:** Students use the five-finger retell to write three paragraphs about the story. Paragraph one includes the characters (thumb), setting (index finger), and problem (tall finger). Paragraph two describes the two major events (ring finger) that led to solving the problem. Paragraph three includes the solution to the problem and other events that happened at the end (little finger) of the story.
* **S-W-B-S (Somebody-Wanted-But-So):** Students can use the S-W-B-S framework to write their own summary of the story. This should be written in sentence form. Somebody: Who is the story about? Wanted: What did this character want? But: But what happened? So: So how did it end? What happened next? Example: Jack and Emilio wanted to go surfing, but a shard attacked Jack, so Emilio saved his life.
* **Events and Details:** Students identify an event in the story and write a paragraph that includes several details related to that event. You could have one students write an event-detail paragraph for the beginning of the story, another write about the end, and the others could write about the middle. The students sequence their paragraphs to create a retelling of the story.
* **Describe a Character’s Feelings:** **Problem/Feelings and Solution Feelings:** Students write a short paragraph describing the problem, the character’s feelings at that point in the story, the solution to the problem, and the character’s feelings at the end of the story.
* **Right-There [Green] Questions:** The answer is found in one place in the text. I can GO directly to the text and find the answer to this kind of question (Who? What? Where? When? How?)
* Problem & Solution
* STP (Stop-Think-Paraphrase)
* Who & What
* VIP (Very Important Part)

**Teaching Metacognitive Strategies to Build Reading Comprehension at the Literal, Interpretive, & Evaluative Level**

**Making Connections (p. 207-208)**

* Literal Level: **Sticky Note Connections** - Insert a sticky note where students should be able to make a connection. Use a prompt such as “Does this remind you of something you have done?” or “Can you remember a time when you felt the same as this character?” As students get practice with this, you should no longer flag the text for students. They should mark the place where they make a connection and record the page number and connection on a chart in their reading notebooks.
* Interpretive Level: **Categorizing Connections** - As students read, they record the page number and their connections in their reading notebook and classify them as Text-to-Self; Text-To-Text, or Text-To-World connections.
* Evaluative Level: **Reflecting on Connections** – As students read, they record the page number and their connections, and then consider how the connection helped enhance their understanding of the text (rather than focusing attention elsewhere). You might scaffold their reflections by giving them prompts such as Visualize (V), Predict (P), or Understand character’s feelings (F).

**Determining Important Ideas (p. 215-219)**

* **VIP Strategy: Very Important Part [with FICTION]** 
  + Literal Level: **Locate and summarize important parts** - Distribute sticky notes and tell students to mark the most important sentence after they read one or two pages. In fiction, usually the important parts contain an action that a character takes in the story. Later, instead of identifying the VIP after 1-2 pages, extend the task to include a short chapter. Students flag the VIP sentence in each chapter and then paraphrase the action or idea in their notebooks. Chapter titles and illustrations can be useful clues. In a follow-up conference, clarify confusions by asking why the student marked a particular sentence so you can analyze their thought processes and provide support.
    - Also **Who & What?** Prompts include “Who was the most important character and What was the most important action or event?”
  + Interpretive Level: **Analyze the internal and external story** – The internal story involves the feelings and relationships of the characters. Students must make an inference – you might ask them “What is the Very Important Part of the character’s feelings in this chapter? What are you thinking about this?” Later, students can analyze the internal and external story (actions). Ask “What is the most important action (external) and the most important relationship or feeling (internal)?” VIPs can vary from one person to the next; encourage different responses and ask students to explain their reasoning.
    - Also **Be the Illustrator.** Select a book with few illustrations (or cover with large sticky notes) and ask students to stop and sketch what they think is most important.
    - Also **Create Your Own Title**: Prompt students to think about the illustrations and who & what and create an appropriate title.
  + Evaluative Level: **Evaluate both internal and external stories –** Select one external and one internal VIP for the entire book. Now they must make a judgment as to THE most important event (external) and character change or feeling (internal) and explain their reasoning for each.
    - Also **Important/Interesting**: Use two-column notes to record facts that are important and facts that are interesting, but not important. This requires they evaluate the chapter and formulate personal opinions. Goal is to not all agree but to share their opinions in a lively discussion for the last five minutes of the lesson and try to convince other members of group that their ideas are right.
    - Also **Identify the Theme**: A theme is a general message that is communicated through the characters, their actions, and events. It if often a lesson to be learned. It may be stated or implied. Prompts include “How does the title of the text relate to the theme? What do you want to remember about this text/passage? What moral or lesson does the text teach? What is the main idea of the text? Why did the author write this story? What point is the author trying to make?
* **VIP Strategy: Very Important Part [with NON-FICTION]**
  + Literal Level: **Main Idea Question/Details** – Show students how to turn a heading into a question and write on the left hand side of a T-chart. As they read each sentence, reread their question and decide whether they learn any information that answers the question. If so, students write the detail in the chart (in bullet form without copying) under the right side of the T-chart.
  + Interpretive Level: **Use text without headings** (or cover headings) and students write their own main idea questions using clues from the text such as bold and repeated words. They add bulleted details that answers each ?
  + Evaluative Level: Use sticky notes to flag important sentences. After reading, share points and justify answers. “I think this is the most important part because…”

**Asking Questions (p. 209-214)**

* Literal Level: **Right-There [Green] Questions** - The answer is found in one place in the text. I can go directly to the text and find the answer to this kind of question (Who? What? Where? When? How?)
* Interpretive Level: **Think and Search [Red] Questions**: I must STOP and think about the passage and what I know to help me answer this question. (I wonder why? Why would? How could? What if? What would have happened if?)
* Interpretive Level: **Complex [Yellow] Questions:** I must use different parts of the text to ask and then answer questions. (Compare: How are \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ alike? Contrast: How are \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ different? What were the differences? Cause/Effect: What caused? What were the effects?
* Evaluative Level: **Opinion Questions:** I must use the text to think of the answer to a question that asks for an opinion or judgment. (Why do you think…? Do you agree [or disagree] with that…? Do you think that is was right for…?

**Visualizing: p. 203-204**

* Literal Level: **Be the Illustrator (Level 1 – Stated details) -** Select a book with few illustrations (or cover with large sticky notes) and ask students to stop and sketch their mental images of *some idea stated in the text* in a way that captures the most important information
* Interpretive Level: **Be the Illustrator (Level 2 – Unstated details) –** Students stop and sketch their mental images of some idea not stated in the text**.** For fiction, you might ask students to sketch what a character might be thinking; For nonfiction, you could have students sketch an idea they must interpret from the text, diagram, or chart.
* Interpretive: **Be the Illustrator (Level 3 - Opinions) -** Students draw a picture or diagram that illustrates *their opinion* about the text. After reading, they have the opportunity to explain and defend their ideas to the group.

**Inferencing**

* Level A: Predict, Support and Confirm (p. 205-207)
* Level B: Making Inferences (p. 231-236)

**Summarizing and Synthesizing (p. 221-223)**

**Cause and Effect Relationship (p. 225-226)**

**Analyzing Characters (p. 227-230)**

**Analyzing Poetry (p. 238-239)**

**Evaluative Comprehension** (responding with opinion and emotions)